



UN HUMANITARIAN CHIEF CALLS FOR URGENT SUPPORT TO SUDAN TO ADDRESS THE MOST ACUTE HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

Khartoum, 24 November 2019. UN humanitarian chief Mark Lowcock today called on the international community to act faster to scale up humanitarian support to Sudan. The humanitarian situation is deteriorating for millions of people, particularly in the central and eastern regions, as the country strives to address the effects of erratic weather, multiple disease outbreaks and the economic crisis.

“It is a crucial time for Sudan and we must make sure that people have their most basic needs met. The international community needs urgently to step up its support”, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock said at the end of a two-day mission to Sudan, his first visit to the country since the formation of a transitional government in August 2019.

While conflict is still a major driver of humanitarian needs in Sudan, incidents have significantly reduced in recent years. The deepening economic crisis, the climate crisis and pockets of violence also continue to drive humanitarian needs. More than 8.5 million people require food, nutrition, protection or other assistance to survive and millions of others struggle to make ends meet. These numbers are projected to grow. Years of conflict have left nearly two million people displaced in the Darfur, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile areas of Sudan.

During a visit to Kassala, in eastern Sudan, the Emergency Relief Coordinator met local communities who have been affected by recent economic and climate shocks and recurrent disease outbreaks. “The economic crisis has a very direct impact on ordinary people’s lives, particularly for women and girls. They live in an area with ongoing dengue and malaria outbreaks, yet cannot afford to pay for medicines. And recurrent droughts and floods means that they cannot grow enough food”.

In Kassala State, over 400,000 people are in crisis levels of food insecurity and only 13 per cent of the rural communities have access to safe water. Communicable disease outbreaks are proliferating at the same time as the economic situation hampers the Government’s capacity to respond. There are acute shortages of basic medicines and health services across the country.

During meetings with the Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, members of the Government and the Sovereign Council, the humanitarian chief welcomed the country’s commitment to improve access for humanitarian organizations to reach people in need. He acknowledged the positive steps taken thus far. “In the last few days the new Government has taken real and important decisions to improve access, and the situation is already notably better than it has been for years”, said Mr. Lowcock. He noted that reducing administrative procedures are

crucial to facilitate movement for aid workers inside the country. The Government is also supporting efforts to access areas still under the control of non-state armed groups. The UN is encouraged by the priority the Government is placing on peace building and conflict resolution across the country.

The humanitarian chief concluded his visit by underscoring the fragility of the situation. "More and faster humanitarian assistance is essential to ensure earlier progress is made in meeting the reasonable aspirations of the people of Sudan", said Mr. Lowcock.

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